### IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

KEITH MATTHEWS :

3006 W. 11<sup>th</sup> Street Chester, PA 19013

CIVIL ACTION

Plaintiff,

No.:

V.

GARDA CL ATLANTIC, INC. d/b/a

GARDAWORLD

401 Kaiser Drive, Suite C

Folcroft, PA 19032

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

Defendant.

Defendant.

### **CIVIL ACTION COMPLAINT**

Plaintiff, Keith Matthews (hereinafter referred to as "Plaintiff"), by and through his undersigned counsel, hereby avers as follows:

#### INTRODUCTION

1. Plaintiff has initiated this action to redress violations by Garda CL Atlantic, Inc. d/b/a GardaWorld (hereinafter referred to as "Defendant") of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended ("ADA" - 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101 *et. seq.*), the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA" - 29 U.S.C. §§ 2601 *et. seq.*), and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act ("PHRA"). Plaintiff was unlawfully terminated by Defendant, and he suffered damages more fully described/sought herein.

### JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This Court has original subject matter jurisdiction over the instant action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331 and 1343(a)(4) because it arises under the laws of the United States and seeks

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Plaintiff intends to amend his instant lawsuit to include claims under the PHRA once his administrative remedies are fully exhausted with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission ("PHRC").

redress for violations of federal laws. There lies supplemental jurisdiction over Plaintiff's statelaw claims because they arise out of the same common nucleus of operative facts as Plaintiff's federal claims asserted herein.

- 3. This Court may properly maintain personal jurisdiction over Defendant because its contacts with this state and this judicial district are sufficient for the exercise of jurisdiction over Defendant to comply with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice, satisfying the standard set forth by the United States Supreme Court in *Int'l Shoe Co. v. Washington*, 326 U.S. 310 (1945), and its progeny.
- 4. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(1) and (b)(2), venue is properly laid in this district because Defendant is deemed to reside where it is subjected to personal jurisdiction, rendering Defendant a resident of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.
- 5. Plaintiff filed a Charge of discrimination and retaliation with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC") and also dual-filed said charge with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission ("PHRC"). Plaintiff has properly exhausted his administrative proceedings before initiating this action by timely filing and dual-filing his Charge with the EEOC and PHRC, and by filing the instant lawsuit within 90 days of receiving a right-to-sue letter from the EEOC.

#### **PARTIES**

- 6. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 7. Plaintiff is an adult who resides at the above-captioned address.
- 8. Garda CL Atlantic, Inc. d/b/a GardaWorld is a corporation providing security services, including armored truck transport, cash vault, staffing, and ATM services, with a location set forth in the above caption.

9. At all times relevant herein, Defendant acted by and through its agents, servants and employees, each of whom acted at all times relevant herein in the course and scope of their employment with and for Defendant.

### FACTUAL BACKGROUND

- 10. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 11. Plaintiff was employed by Defendant for over 12 years, beginning on or about August 8, 2010, as a Premise Guard, for Respondent's 401 Kaiser Drive, Suite C, Folcroft, PA location.
- 12. Plaintiff was primarily supervised by Manager, Al Ware (hereinafter "Ware"), but he was also generally supervised by Branch Manager, Victor (last name unknown, hereinafter "Victor") and Assistant Branch Manager, Zach (last name unknown, hereinafter "Zach").
- 13. Throughout Plaintiff's employment with Defendant, he was a hard-working employee who performed his job well.
- 14. Plaintiff has and continues to suffer from ADA-qualifying disabilities, including but not limited to kidney disease and gout (and associated complications).
- 15. Despite his aforesaid health conditions, Plaintiff was able to perform his job duties well; however, he (at times) required some reasonable medical accommodations (discussed further *infra*).
- 16. For example, in or about April of 2022, Plaintiff was diagnosed with kidney disease. As a result, Plaintiff requested and/or utilized just a few days off for the next few months for doctor's appointments, until commencing approved block FMLA leave, from on or about June 9, 2022, until on or about September 5, 2022.

- 17. Plaintiff was cleared to work without restrictions on or about September 5, 2022.
- 18. Throughout Plaintiff's aforesaid medical leave, he kept management, including but not limited to Zach, apprised of the status of his serious health conditions.
- 19. Following Plaintiff's return from medical leave on or about September 5, 2022, Plaintiff continued to perform his job duties well and without issue for the next several months.
  - 20. Thereafter, on or about December 17, 2022, Plaintiff was diagnosed with gout.
- 21. Subsequently, on or about January 6, 2023, Plaintiff suffered a severe flare-up of his gout, such that he could barely walk.
- 22. As a result of the aforesaid flare-up of Plaintiff's serious health conditions on or about January 6, 2023, he asked management if he could leave work immediately for medical care, but he was asked to stay until the end of his shift until he could be relieved, which he did.
- 23. Plaintiff then called out of work for the next few days for diagnostic testing and medical treatment (including medication).
- 24. It took several days for the medication to be effective for Plaintiff's pain and mobility issues. As a result, Plaintiff reached out to Defendant to request an additional few weeks of medical leave (a reasonable accommodation under the ADA),<sup>2</sup> until on or about February 7, 2023.

Courts have consistently he

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Courts have consistently held that leaves of absence can constitute reasonable accommodations under the ADA. *See Bernhard v. Brown & Brown of Lehigh Valley, Inc.*, 720 F. Supp. 2d 694, 703 (E.D. Pa. 2010)(the court explained that a period of up to 3 months off from work can constitute a reasonable accommodation citing); *Conoshenti v. Public Serv. Elec. & Gas Co.*, 364 F.3d 135, 151 (3d Cir. 2004)("[T]he federal courts that have permitted a leave of absence as a reasonable accommodation under the ADA have reasoned ... that applying such a reasonable accommodation at the present time would enable the employee to perform his essential job functions in the near future."); *Sharbaugh v. W. Haven Manor, LP*, CV 14-1723, 2016 WL 6834613, at \*15 (W.D. Pa. Nov. 21, 2016)(finding eight (8) months of medical leave to be a reasonable accommodation); *Shannon v. City of Philadelphia*, No. 98-5277, 1999 WL 1065210, at \*6 (E.D. Pa. 1999) ("Viewing the evidence in the light most favorable to [plaintiff], the court finds that a reasonable jury could conclude that [plaintiff's] request for an additional three months of unpaid leave for medical treatment was a reasonable accommodation."); *Cameron v. YRC, Inc.*, No. 18-5022, 2020 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 25804, at \*7 (E.D. Pa. Feb. 14, 2020).

- 25. Plaintiff was then cleared to return to work without restrictions on or about February 7, 2023.
- 26. When Plaintiff returned to work on or about February 7, 2023, he worked for the entire day without issue. However, at the end of the day, he was called into a meeting and abruptly terminated by Victor for purportedly having too many "unexcused absences" and "no calls, no shows," which was completely untrue.
- 27. In response to his termination, Plaintiff informed Victor that he had only ever called out for his aforesaid serious medical conditions and had always routinely provided any doctor paperwork requested by Defendant, followed proper call out procedures, and kept Zach informed by text of his need for medical leave, including his anticipated return dates on each occasion.
- 28. Notwithstanding the same, Victor simply reiterated to Plaintiff that he was being terminated for taking too much time off, despite that the majority (if not all) of his time off was for medical reasons.
- 29. Defendant failed to accommodate Plaintiff by (1) considering his requests for/utilization of intermittent and/or block medical leave to care for and treat his aforesaid health conditions in making the decision to terminate him; and (2) terminating him **just hours** after returning from medical leave.
- 30. Plaintiff believes and therefore avers that he was subjected to retaliation and then terminated because of (1) his known and/or perceived health problems; (2) his record of impairment; (3) his requested accommodations; and (4) Defendant's failure to properly accommodate him (discussed *supra*).

#### **COUNT I**

## <u>Violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as Amended ("ADA")</u> (1] Actual/Perceived/Record of Disability Discrimination; [2] Retaliation; and [3] Failure to Accommodate)

- 31. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 32. Plaintiff suffered from qualifying health conditions under the ADA which affected his ability (at times) to perform some daily life activities (set forth *supra*).
- 33. Despite Plaintiff's aforementioned health conditions and limitations, he was still able to perform the duties of his job well with Defendant, however, Plaintiff did require reasonable medical accommodations at times.
- 34. Plaintiff kept Defendant informed of his serious medical conditions and need for medical treatment and other accommodations.
- 35. Plaintiff requested reasonable accommodations from Defendant, including but not limited to intermittent and/or block time off to care for and treat for his aforesaid medical conditions.
- 36. Plaintiff was terminated, on or about February 7, 2023, in close temporal proximity to requesting/utilizing reasonable accommodations (*i.e.*, medical leave) for his health conditions.
- 37. Defendant failed to accommodate Plaintiff by (1) considering his requests for/utilization of intermittent and/or block medical leave to care for and treat his aforesaid health conditions in making the decision to terminate him; and (2) terminating him **just hours** after returning from medical leave.
- 38. Plaintiff believes and therefore avers that he was subjected to retaliation because of (1) his known and/or perceived health problems; (2) his record of impairment; (3) his requested accommodations; and (4) Defendant's failure to properly accommodate him (discussed *supra*).

- 39. Plaintiff further believes and therefore avers that his disabilities were a motivating/determinative factor in the termination of his employment with Defendant.
  - 40. Defendant's actions as aforesaid constitute violations of the ADA.

# COUNT II <u>Violations of the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA")</u> (Retaliation & Interference)

- 41. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 42. Plaintiff was an eligible employee under the definitional terms of the FMLA, 29 U.S.C. § 2611(a)(i)(ii).
- 43. Plaintiff requested leave for medical reasons from Defendant, his employer, with whom he had been employed for at least twelve months pursuant to the requirements of 29 U.S.C.A § 2611(2)(i).
- 44. Plaintiff had at least 1,250 hours of service with Defendant during his last full year of employment.
- 45. Defendant is engaged in an industry affecting commerce and employed at least fifty (50) or more employees within 75 miles of the location where Plaintiff worked for Defendant for each working day during each of the twenty (20) or more calendar work weeks in the current or proceeding calendar year, pursuant to 29 U.S.C.A § 2611(4)(A)(i).
- 46. Plaintiff was entitled to receive leave pursuant to 29 U.S.C.A § 2612 (a)(1) for a total of twelve (12) work weeks of leave on a block or intermittent basis.
- 47. Plaintiff was terminated in close proximity to his request for/utilization of FMLA-qualifying leave to care for and treat for his serious health conditions.

- 48. Defendant committed interference and retaliation violations of the FMLA by: (1) terminating Plaintiff for requesting and/or exercising his FMLA rights and/or for taking FMLA-qualifying leave; (2) considering Plaintiff's FMLA leave needs in making the decision to terminate him; (3) terminating Plaintiff to intimidate him and/or prevent him from taking FMLA-qualifying leave in the future; and (4) making negative comments and/or taking actions towards him that would dissuade a reasonable person from exercising his rights under the FMLA (set forth *supra*).
  - 49. These actions as aforesaid constitute violations of the FMLA.

**WHEREFORE**, Plaintiff prays that this Court enter an Order providing that:

- A. Defendant is to promulgate and adhere to a policy prohibiting discrimination and retaliation in the future against any employee(s);
- B. Defendant is to compensate Plaintiff, reimburse Plaintiff, and make Plaintiff whole for any and all pay and benefits Plaintiff would have received had it not been for Defendant's illegal actions, including but not limited to back pay, front pay, salary, pay increases, bonuses, insurance, benefits, training, promotions, reinstatement, and seniority.
- C. Plaintiff is to be awarded punitive and/or liquidated damages, as permitted by applicable law, in an amount believed by the Court or trier of fact to be appropriate to punish Defendant for its willful, deliberate, malicious and outrageous conduct and to deter Defendant or other employers from engaging in such misconduct in the future;
- D. Plaintiff is to be accorded other equitable and legal relief as the Court deems just, proper, and appropriate (including but not limited to damages for emotional distress/pain and suffering);
- E. Plaintiff is to be awarded the costs and expenses of this action and reasonable attorneys' fees as provided by applicable federal and state law; and

F. Plaintiff is to be given a jury trial as demanded in the caption of this Complaint.

Respectfully submitted,

KARPF, KARPF & CERUTTI, P.C.

By:

Ari R. Karpf, Esq. 3331 Street Road Two Greenwood Square, Suite 128 Bensalem, PA 19020 (215) 639-0801 Attorneys for Plaintiff

Dated: May 22, 2023

### IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

### CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM

Telephone	FAX Number	E-Mail Address				
(215) 639-0801	(215) 639-4970	akarpf@karpf-law.com				
Date	Attorney-at-law	Attorney for				
5/22/2023 .		Plaintiff	•			
(f) Standard Management -	Cases that do not fall into	any one of the other tracks.	(X)			
(e) Special Management – C commonly referred to as the court. (See reverse simanagement cases.)	Cases that do not fall into to complex and that need specide of this form for a detail	ecial or intense management by	( )			
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(c) Arbitration - Cases required to be designated for arbitration under Local Civil Rule 53.2.						
(b) Social Security - Cases r and Human Services den	requesting review of a deci lying plaintiff Social Secur	sion of the Secretary of Health ity Benefits.	( )			
(a) Habeas Corpus - Cases brought under 28 U.S.C. § 2241 through § 2255.						
SELECT ONE OF THE FO	OLLOWING CASE MAN	AGEMENT TRACKS:				
plaintiff shall complete a Car filing the complaint and serve side of this form.) In the e designation, that defendant s the plaintiff and all other par to which that defendant belief	I Justice Expense and Dele se Management Track Des e a copy on all defendants. event that a defendant does shall, with its first appearan- rties, a Case Management in eves the case should be ass		me of			
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(Civ. 660) 10/02

## Case 2:23-cv-01931-KN SNITE DOCAMES DISTRICT | Page 11 of 12 FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

### **DESIGNATION FORM**

(to be used by counsel or pro se plaintiff to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to the appropriate calendar)

Address of Plaintiff: 3006 W. 11th Street, Chester, PA 19013								
Address of Defendant: 401 Kaiser Drive, Suite C, Folcroft, PA 19032								
Place of Accident, Incident or Transaction: Defendant's place of business								
RELATED CASE, IF ANY:								
Case Number: Date Terminated:								
Civil cases are deemed related when Yes is answered to any of the following questions:								
1. Is this case related to property included in an earlier numbered suit pending or within one year Yes No X previously terminated action in this court?								
2. Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same transaction as a prior suit  Yes  No X								
3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already in suit or any earlier numbered case pending or within one year previously terminated action of this court?								
4. Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social security appeal, or pro se civil rights  Yes  No   X								
I certify that, to my knowledge, the within case is / is not related to any case now pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court except as noted above.								
DATE: 5/22/2023 ARK2484 / 91538								
Attorney-at-Law / Pro Se Plaintiff Attorney I.D. # (if applicable)								
CIVIL: (Place a √ in one category only)								
CIVIL: (Place a √in one category only)  A. Federal Question Cases:  B. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases:								
A. Federal Question Cases:  B. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases:  1. Indemnity Contract, Marine Contract, and All Other Contracts  1. Insurance Contract and Other Contracts								
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A. Federal Question Cases:  1. Indemnity Contract, Marine Contract, and All Other Contracts 2. FELA 3. Jones Act-Personal Injury 4. Antitrust  B. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases:  1. Insurance Contract and Other Contracts 2. Airplane Personal Injury 3. Assault, Defamation 4. Marine Personal Injury								
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A. Federal Question Cases:  1. Indemnity Contract, Marine Contract, and All Other Contracts  2. FELA  3. Jones Act-Personal Injury  4. Antitrust  5. Patent  6. Labor-Management Relations  7. Civil Rights  B. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases:  1. Insurance Contract and Other Contracts  2. Airplane Personal Injury  3. Assault, Defamation  4. Marine Personal Injury  5. Motor Vehicle Personal Injury  6. Other Personal Injury (Please specify):  7. Products Liability								
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A. Federal Question Cases:  1. Indemnity Contract, Marine Contract, and All Other Contracts 2. FELA 3. Jones Act-Personal Injury 3. Assault, Defamation 4. Antitrust 5. Patent 6. Labor-Management Relations 7. Civil Rights 8. Habeas Corpus 9. Securities Act(s) Cases 10. Social Security Review Cases 11. All other Federal Question Cases (Please specify):  ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION (The effect of this certification is to remove the case from eligibility for arbitration.)  ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION  (The effect of this certification is for remove the case from eligibility for arbitration.)  ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION  (The effect of this certification is for remove the case from eligibility for arbitration.)  ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION  (The effect of this certification is for remove the case from eligibility for arbitration.)  ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION  (The effect of this certification is for remove the case from eligibility for arbitration.)  ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION  (The effect of this certification is for remove the case from eligibility for arbitration.)  ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION  (The effect of this certification is for remove the case from eligibility for arbitration.)  ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION  (The effect of this certification is for remove the case from eligibility for arbitration.)  ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION  (The effect of this certification is for remove the case from eligibility for arbitration.)  ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION  (The effect of this certification is for remove the case from eligibility for arbitration.)  ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION  (The effect of this certification is for remove the case from eligibility for arbitration.)								

### Case 2:23-cv-01931-KNS\_Document 1 Filed 05/22/23 Page 12 of 12 CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

purpose of initiating the civil de	ocket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCT	TIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF	THIS FORM.)	771, is required for the use of the	ic Clerk of Court for the		
I. (a) PLAINTIFFS			DEFENDANTS	DEFENDANTS			
MATTHEWS, KEITH  (b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff  (EXCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)			GARDA CL ATI	GARDA CL ATLANTIC, INC. D/B/A GARDAWORLD			
			County of Residence of First Listed Defendant Delaware  (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)  NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.				
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, A Karpf, Karpf & Cerutti, J Suite 128, Bensalem, PA	P.C.; 3331 Street Road	l, Two Greenwood S	Attorneys (If Known)				
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	CTION (Place an "X" in Or	ne Box Only)	III. CITIZENSHIP OF P	PRINCIPAL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintij		
1 U.S. Government X 3 Federal Question Plaintiff (U.S. Government Not a Party)		$ \begin{array}{c ccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$					
2 U.S. Government Defendant	*		Citizen of Another State 2 2 Incorporated and Principal Place 5 5 of Business In Another State				
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IV. NATURE OF SUIT		(y) RTS	FORFEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY  BANKRUPTCY	of Suit Code Descriptions. OTHER STATUTES		
□ 110 Insurance □ 120 Marine □ 130 Miller Act □ 140 Negotiable Instrument □ 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment □ 151 Medicare Act □ 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) □ 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits □ 160 Stockholders' Suits □ 190 Other Contract □ 195 Contract Product Liability □ 196 Franchise    REAL PROPERTY   □ 210 Land Condemnation □ 220 Foreclosure □ 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment □ 245 Tort Product Liability □ 290 All Other Real Property	PERSONAL INJURY  ' 310 Airplane ' 315 Airplane Product     Liability ' 320 Assault, Libel & Slander ' 330 Federal Employers'     Liability ' 340 Marine ' 345 Marine Product     Liability ' 350 Motor Vehicle ' 355 Motor Vehicle     Product Liability ' 360 Other Personal     Injury ' 362 Personal Injury -     Medical Malpractice  CIVIL RIGHTS    440 Other Civil Rights   441 Voting   442 Employment   443 Housing/     Accommodations  X 445 Amer. w/Disabilities -     Employment   446 Amer. w/Disabilities -     Other   448 Education	PERSONAL INJURY  365 Personal Injury - Product Liability  367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability  368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability  PERSONAL PROPERT  370 Other Fraud  371 Truth in Lending  380 Other Personal Property Damage Product Liability  PRISONER PETITIONS  Habeas Corpus:  463 Alien Detainee  510 Motions to Vacate Sentence  530 General  535 Death Penalty Other:  540 Mandamus & Other  550 Civil Rights  555 Prison Condition  560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement	Gestated Seizure of Property 21 USC 881   Gestated Seizure of Property 21 USC 881   Gestate Ge	' 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 ' 423 Withdrawal	375 False Claims Act 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729(a)) 400 State Reapportionment 410 Antitrust 430 Banks and Banking 450 Commerce 460 Deportation 700 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations 480 Consumer Credit 490 Cable/Sat TV 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange 890 Other Statutory Actions 891 Agricultural Acts 893 Environmental Matters 895 Freedom of Information Act 896 Arbitration 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes		
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VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO	Brief description of ca		,				
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:		IS A CLASS ACTION	DEMAND \$	CHECK YES only JURY DEMAND	if demanded in complaint:  X Yes 'No		
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